



Ambassador Wilkins' Update: Border News and The Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI)

"It's all about balancing and honoring the great American tradition of being a welcoming society with our absolute necessity to be a nation of laws – one that protects and honors the rights and privileges of her citizens – one that takes its security and its protection seriously."

WHTI New Passport Card Rules

The goal of the WHTI is to strengthen border security and facilitate entry into the United States for U.S. citizens and legitimate foreign visitors by providing standardized, secure and reliable documentation which will allow the Department of Homeland Security to quickly, reliably and accurately identify a traveler.

Under the proposed plan, a U.S. Passport or a Passport card (also referred to as the PASS card) will be acceptable to fulfill document requirements at the border.

The Passport Card is currently under development and will be available for use for travel by land or sea only (including ferries) between the U.S. and Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean, and Bermuda.

Like the traditional Passport book, the Passport card will be good for 10 years for adults and 5 years for a minor (under 16) but it will be less expensive than a Passport – US\$45 for adults and US\$35 for minors, including a one time US\$25 execution fee.

The new requirements outlined above will be rolled out in the following phases:

- On January 8, 2007, U.S. citizens traveling by air between the United States and Canada, Mexico, Central and South America, the Caribbean, and Bermuda will be required to present a valid U.S. passport, Air NEXUS card, or U.S. Coast Guard Merchant Mariner Document.
- As early as January 1, 2008, U.S. citizens traveling between the U.S. and Canada, Mexico, Central and South America, the Caribbean, and Bermuda by land or sea (including ferries), may be required to present a valid U.S. passport or other documents as determined by the Department of Homeland Security.

The Passport card will be the size of a credit card, easy to keep in a wallet, with a special sleeve for protection.

The Passport card will contain a radio frequency chip that will transmit a unique number as the user approaches the border, which will allow the border official to verify the document. No personal information such as social security number or home address, for example, will be transmitted through this technology.

*To learn more about what's new
on the border, visit:
<http://ottawa.usembassy.gov>*

We will continue to work with Canadian officials as they explore creating a Canadian version of the Passport card that would contain the same vital information called for in the WHTI regulations.



U.S. Embassy, Ottawa, November 2006